

Pakistan's Superior Nuclear Capability

4410. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Pakistan making ahead of India in nuke capability" appearing in the 'Newstime' dated 26th March, 2001;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government propose to have an inquiry into the causes of Pakistan's superior nuclear capability since 1998 and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) what steps are proposed to be taken to address the problems which are hindering India's nuclear advancement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) It is assessed that efforts by Pakistan to enhance its nuclear capabilities continue. Government remain fully committed to taking all necessary steps to effectively safeguard India's security, with a credible minimum nuclear deterrent based on realistic assessment of the country's security environment.

Requirement of Ration Cards

4411. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO:

SHRI R. S. GAVAI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision in respect of those ration card holders who do not require rationed item from PDS but holding the ration cards only as a proof of residence which is required for various verification purposes; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) Ration cards are not intended to be used as documents of identity or proof of residence. State Governments/UT Administrations have been repeatedly advised to discourage the use of ration cards for various verification purposes. They have been advised that other valid documents like passport, driving license, voter's identity card or identity cards issued by income tax authorities could be considered for verifying the identity of individuals by the State Governments and their agencies.

As per the reports received from the Governments of twenty States/UTs viz. Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and UT of Chandigarh, Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Pondicherry have taken steps to stop the use of ration cards for the purpose of identification.

FCI base depots in Chhattisgarh and M.P.

†4412. SHRI KAILASH JOSHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of base depots of the Food Corporation of India in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh for supplying foodgrains under the Public Distribution System;

(b) the capacity of these depots and the quantity of available stock of wheat and rice in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh as on 31st December, 2000;

(c) whether there is any proposal for opening up of more base depots in these States in public interest; and

(d) the price on which wheat and rice is being provided under the Public Distribution System with details thereof?

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.